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SUBJECT: TIP: INTERIM ASSESSMENT, CZECH REPUBLIC

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¶1. (U) The Czech Republic continues to make significant progress in identifying Trafficking in Persons as a law enforcement and judicial priority, and continues to provide necessary resources, funding, and training to increase detection and overall awareness among labor inspectors, police, prosecutors, and judges; and improve the lives of victims. Per reftel, the government's efforts are noted below:

a) In the first nine months of 2007, Czech police have investigated 18 cases under the state's Trafficking in Persons statute. In the first half of the year, there were also 15 prosecutions of traffickers. Out of these there were four convictions: three traffickers were sentenced to jail, and one received a suspended sentence. While information on length of sentences was not yet available from the MOI, these numbers show a positive trend in sentencing violators to jail over previous years. Additionally, reflecting the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to combating trafficking, the Czech Republic used other criminal statutes to charge violators. Accordingly, in the first nine months of the year police investigated 46 cases of pimping. There were also 47 prosecutions under the pimping statutes. At the time MOI provided post with data, there were no statistics on the number of convictions or length of sentences under the pimping statutes for the year.

(NOTE: The numbers of investigations listed above are not directly related to the number of prosecutions, which may reflect investigations begun in previous years. END NOTE)

b) Anti-trafficking courses are now a regular part of the introductory training curriculum at the police academy, which every incoming officer must take. Trafficking is also part of mandatory continuing education requirements that all police officers must take to keep their certifications. Additionally, police academies offer more targeted training in anti-trafficking measures for members of the police who specialize in this area. Training sessions are led by experts inside and outside the police academies.

Trafficking in persons has also become a part of the official curriculum at the judicial academy for judges in training. Started two years ago as a U.S. Embassy initiative, the TIP courses for prosecutors and judges are now offered twice a year. Anti-trafficking courses are also taught to judges and prosecutors as part of foreign language training, which assures exposure to a broader segment of the judicial body.

c) In 2007 the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs finished translation of the International Labor Organization's guide on "Trafficking in Persons for Purposes of Forced Labor - How to Monitor Recruitment of Migrant Workers," which is now regularly distributed at conferences and seminars on Labor Trafficking, and is given to the police, labor inspectors,

and to labor and tax offices. Recently, the Ministry completed a seminar in conjunction with authorities from Italy to learn about the labor patterns and working conditions of illegal migrant workers in Italy, which serves as a case-study for other EU countries.

The government has increased funding for social workers who help victims of trafficking. Sources of funding include the EU European Social Fund and the Czech national budget. The MOI also established a "Center for Migration" which provides analysis of illegal employment and also prepares anti-trafficking literature in a number of foreign languages.

e) The MOI stated that there have been no allegations of border guards facilitating entry into the country of illegal workers, and no information has come to their attention that would support this request. Separately, border procedures have undergone extensive reform in line with measures required for the Czech Republic's entry into the Schengen zone, which will occur on December 21, 2007.

f) In a major development, the MOI has increased the reflection period for victims, i.e., the time trafficking victims have to decide whether to cooperate with authorities and receive full protection and assistance under the Program of Assistance and Protection of TIP Victims. Previously, the government had provided trafficking victims with a 30-day reflection period. A victim's testimony at trial against traffickers formerly was a condition to receive program benefits. The new system has two key changes. First, victims now have a 60-day reflection period to make such decisions. Secondly, the government has relaxed standards for victim cooperation: The new language seems to permit victim cooperation that falls somewhat short of actually testifying at trial without jeopardizing their access to the program's protections and benefits.

For the first 10 months of the year, 14 victims were included in the program, which is the same number as compared to the whole of last year.

Victims who prefer not to become involved in investigations are still adequately provided for, receiving medical and psychological services, and are given a paid ticket home by IOM. Once they arrive in their country of origin, they are met by a social worker who accompanies them back to their families.

The government has also increased its support for NGOs that provide care for trafficking victims.
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